

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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C O N F I D E N T I A L TOKYO 19580

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: GE JA
SUBJECT: VISIT OF GDR FOREIGN MINISTER

REF: TOKYO 18024

1. SUMMARY: AS DESCRIBED BY FONOFF, DECEMBER 6-12 VISIT OF GDR FONMIN FISCHER WAS ARTISTIC SUCCESS BUT LIGHT ON SUBSTANCE. ECONOMIC ISSUES WERE SKIRTED (HAVING BEEN ADDRESSED DURING NOVEMBER MITTAG VISIT), AND POLITICAL DISCUSSIONS WERE HIGHLY PRO FORMA. PUBLIC EMPHASIS CENTERED ON CULTURAL/ EDUCATIONAL TIES, AREA IN WHICH, ACCORDING TO FONOFF, GDR CONSISTENTLY OUT-PERFORMS FRG. END SUMMARY.

2. ACCORDING TO FONOFF 2ND EAST EUROPE DIVDIR ONODERA, FISCHER VISIT WAS SMOOTH, DEVOID OF SURPRISES, AND SUCCESSFUL WITHIN CONTEXT OF MODEST INTEREST TWO COUNTRIES SHARE.
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FISCHER HAD ONE AND A HALF HOURS WITH FONMIN SONODA, COURTESY CALL ON PM, AND MEETINGS WITH MINISTERS OF INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND INDUSTRY, EDUCATION, AND SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY.

3. BECAUSE MITTAG VISIT IN NOVEMBER FOCUSED ON ECONOMIC ISSUES (REFTEL), THESE WERE TOUCHED ON ONLY LIGHTLY

IN FISCHER CONVERSATIONS WITH FONMIN AND IN ONLY GENERAL TERMS WITH MITI. FISCHER MADE PITCH FOR CONCLUSION OF TREATY OF TRADE AND NAVIGATION BETWEEN GDR AND JAPAN, WHICH JAPAN CONTINUES TO RESIST FOR POLITICAL REASONS (NOT WISHING TO BECOME INVOLVED IN DIVIDED GERMANY PROBLEMS). ACCORDING TO ONODERA, GDR REMAINS ONLY EAST EUROPEAN COUNTRY WITH WHICH JAPAN DOES NOT HAVE SUCH TREATY. ONODERA SAID FISCHER ALSO ASKED FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF PERIODIC EXPERT-LEVEL MEETINGS ON ECONOMIC AFFAIRS SUCH AS JAPAN CONDUCTS WITH MOST OTHER EE COUNTRIES. JAPANESE SIDESTEPED THIS AS WELL.

4. DISCUSSION OF POLITICAL ISSUES IN MEETING WITH SONODA WAS PRO FORMA. JAPANESE PRESENTED THEIR VIEWS ON SITUATION ON KOREAN PENINSULA AND SOUTHEAST ASIA, AND DESCRIBED THEIR RELATIONS WITH CHINA AND USSR. FISCHER THEN GAVE WHAT JAPANESE REGARDED AS "STANDARD" GDR INTERPRETATION OF EVENTS IN EUROPE INCLUDING CSCE AND MBFR. THERE WAS NO REAL DIALOGUE, HOWEVER. IN BRIEF COMMENT ON HIS RECENT VISIT TO PYONGYANG, WHERE HE ACCOMPANIED HONECKER, FISCHER SAID HE THOUGHT DPRK FONMIN CLEARLY WANTED TO HAVE CONTACT WITH JAPAN; HE QUICKLY ADDED THAT HE WAS NOT SEEKING TO ACT AS A "MEDIATOR."

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5. ACCORDING TO ONODERA, FISCHER RARELY REFERRED TO SOVIET UNION DURING DISCUSSION OF INTERNATIONAL AND ASIAN ISSUES. ALTHOUGH HE TOOK LINE ON GENERAL SUBJECT OF ASIAN SECURITY CLOSELY RESEMBLING SUBSTANCE OF SOVIET STATEMENTS (I.E., DESIRABILITY OF EXTENDING "DETENTE" TO ASIA), FORMULATION WAS SUBTLE AND UNOBJECTIONABLE TO JAPANESE.

6. FISCHER AND SONODA SIGNED CULTURAL EXCHANGE AGREEMENT, PROVIDING FOR INCREASED GOVERNMENT FUNDING FOR EXCHANGES OF SCHOLARS AND ARTISTS. GDR IS INCREASINGLY ACTIVE IN CULTURAL FIELD IN JAPAN, SAID ONODERA, AND IN TERMS OF SOPHISTICATION AS WELL AS FREQUENCY OF ITS CULTURAL PRESENTATIONS CONSISTENTLY OUTPERFORMS FRG HERE.

7. ONODERA FELT THAT, WHILE THERE WAS ALWAYS A SOVIET COMPONENT IN GDR DIPLOMACY, FISCHER VISIT WAS DESIGNED PRIMARILY TO SERVE GDR'S OWN OBJECTIVES VIS-A-VIS JAPAN -- TO MAINTAIN HARMONIOUS POLITICAL RELATIONSHIP, ENHANCE GDR PRESTIGE, AND LAY GROUNDWORK FOR INCREASED ECONOMIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL INTERCHANGE.

HE THOUGH FISCHER MADE MODEST CONTRIBUTION TO
THOSE AIMS.
MANSFIELD

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